

**CITY OF LONG BEACH
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND MARINE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
JANUARY 20, 2005**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chris Kozaites, President, at 9:01 a.m., at the El Dorado Park West Community Center, in the Senior Center Library. Phil Hester, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine, took roll call and confirmed a quorum.

Present: Chris Kozaites, President
Harry Saltzgaver, Vice President
Bea Antenore
William Marmion
Drew Satariano

Absent: Raymond Chavarria (excused)
Simon George (excused)

Staff: Phil Hester, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine
Thomas Shippey, Manager, Maintenance Operations Bureau
Dennis Eschen, Manager, Planning and Development
Steven Neal, Chief Ranger
Cynthia Fogg, Superintendent, Youth Services
Cristina Cota, Superintendent, Personnel and Training
Gwendolyn Parker, Superintendent, Contracts & Revenue Development
Robin Black, Executive Secretary to the Director

Guests: Jessica Hall, North East Trees
Mary Loquvam, So Cal Wetlands Recovery Project
Amy Bodek, City of Long Beach
Ann Cantrell, Los Cerritos Wetlands Land and Trust
Sarah Serviss
Thomas Brown, Lakewood Village Little League
Robert Lamond, Partners of Parks
Don May, Calif. Earth Corps
Janet Vernon
Ron Krasniak, Lakewood Village Little League
Mary Parsell, El Dorado Audubon
David Kunder, Long Beach Organic
Summer Hansen, Be Community Friendly Children's Day
Angela Reynolds, City of Long Beach

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 16, 2004

It was moved by Commissioner Marmion and seconded by Commissioner Antenore to approve the December 16, 2004 Parks and Recreation Commission minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

III. SAMMY AWARD PRESENTATION – DIANE LEWIS

President Kozaites stated that the Sammy Award would be deferred to the February 17 meeting.

IV. EMPLOYEE-OF-THE-MONTH PRESENTATION FOR JANUARY

President Kozaites stated that Vice President Saltzgaver would present the Employees of the Month.

Vice President Saltzgaver announced Emy Arteaga as the January Administrative Employee of the Month, from the Maintenance Operations Bureau.

Mr. Terry Lortz stated that it has been a pleasure working with Ms. Arteaga for the past 10 years. He said that Ms. Arteaga has been both his right arm and left arm at times. He said that she has also been very helpful by being bilingual. He said that in addition to her regular duties, she is also the secretary for the Municipal Golf Commission and she is extremely deserving of this award.

V. COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

#05-0101

PERSONAL SERVICES/INSTRUCTION AGREEMENTS-MONTHLY APPROVAL

It was moved by Vice President Saltzgaver and seconded by Commissioner Antenore to authorize the Community Recreation Services Bureau manager of his or her management designee to execute the Personal Services and Instruction Agreements and amend Attachment "A" of the agreements as needed. The motion carried unanimously.

#05-0102

BATTING CAGES AND BULLPENS FOR LAKEWOOD VILLAGE LITTLE LEAGUE

Mr. Hester stated that this is a request received from Lakewood Village Little League to install batting cages adjacent to their little league field at Heartwell Park and to commemorate their 50th anniversary. He said that Department staff met on site with the group to make sure there would be no negative impact to the surrounding area and this is consistent with batting cages installed by other little leagues.

It was moved by Commissioner Satariano and seconded by Commissioner Antenore to approve the construction and installation of batting cages and bullpens at field #2 for Lakewood Village Little League at Heartwell Park. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Saltzgaver thanked the Little League for stepping up with this request and requested the Little League make sure they keep the batting cages open to everyone, but maintain security.

VI. COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

A. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE President Kozaites, Chair

President Kozaites stated that the Committee met last week and discussed a few items and picked a date for the park tour, February 25, which he would like to confirm with everyone.

Mr. Hester stated that this tour would probably take about three quarters of the day to tour all the new park sites.

Commissioner Marmion suggested starting at 9:30 a.m., and meeting at the administration building with new staff also.

Vice President Saltzgaver suggested an agenda at the February meeting.

Commissioner Antenore suggested that Bob Lamond be invited, because Partners of Parks has so much to do with the parks.

B. FINANCE AND APPEALS COMMITTEE Commissioner Satariano, Chair

Commissioner Satariano called attention to the budget numbers included on the report in the packet. He said that the Committee is also continuing to work on the fee waiver policy, which should be forthcoming in the February meeting.

C. PARK SAFETY COMMITTEE Commissioner Marmion, Chair

Commissioner Marmion stated that the Committee did not meet, but the reports were included in the packet.

Commissioner Satariano stated that it looks like safety gear is a problem for skate boarders, particularly at Houghton Park. Chief Neal responded that safety equipment is a hindrance to some skate boarders and there is opposition to wearing gear that could protect them in a fall. He said that the rangers

continually remind skate boarders of the consequences if safety gear is not worn.

Commissioner Marmion asked about filling the park ranger vacancies. Chief Neal responded that the Department hired one park ranger two months ago and two park rangers are currently going through background checks. He said that currently the Department is waiting for approval of a requisition to hire one full time and several part time rangers.

D. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION COMMITTEE
Commissioner Chavarria, Chair

Commissioner Satariano stated that the Committee met this morning. He said that Commissioner Chavarria wanted to delve deeper than the comment cards to bring input. He stated that Cristina Cota told them that the outreach goes well beyond the comment cards, because the Department staff consistently hold meetings on site with neighbors and users of our facilities.

E. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS COMMITTEE
Vice President Saltzgaver, Chair

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that the quarterly meeting was held last week and the quarterly report is included in the packet. He briefly went over the highlights of the report. He stated that the public meetings for the universally accessible playgrounds have begun.

F. CITY SCHOOLS/JOINT COMMITTEE
Commissioner Antenore, Chair

Commissioner Antenore stated that the Committee would meet next month.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO COMMISSION

A. DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT – DECEMBER 2004

Vice President Saltzgaver said that at the City Council meeting last week, the City Manager mentioned the City getting reimbursed by the State for the extra work during the storm. He asked what the status was on this.

Mr. Shippey stated that this reimbursement is being coordinated by the Disaster Management office in the Fire Department, and they are collecting information citywide for reimbursement. He said that once the County receives over \$25 million in requests for reimbursement, the County could then submit that amount to the State, who will declare an emergency.

Mr. Hester stated that the Department's staff did a great job during the storms.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

President Kozaites stated that there was no correspondence.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Kozaites stated that there was no unfinished business.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. PRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED SPORTS PARK SITE – THE FRIENDS OF THE WILLOW/SPRING GULCH

Mr. Hester stated that a letter was received from this group requesting a presentation concerning the Willow/Spring site, which is the proposed site for the Sports Park.

Ms. Jessica Hall introduced herself as an environmental designer at North East Trees, which is a non-profit organization based in northeast Los Angeles. She said that she is also Ballona Creek Watershed Coordinator for the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and through these two roles, she spent a lot of time looking at creeks, especially historic creeks.

Ms. Hall discussed changes in the surrounding region and in buried streams and creeks in the Los Angeles area. She said that storm drains now carry the flow of the streams and creeks in the Los Angeles area, which has lost 90% of its streams and rivers to channelization and creek culverting. Ms. Hall stated that the city has become an amalgam of vistas shaped by the automobile, suburban development, clusters of commercial development and channelization of streams. She explained that concrete over the land does not let water absorb into the ground and there is a higher risk of flooding. She brought up that this higher density creates greater poverty and there is less park space. Ms. Hall also brought up the lost plant and bird species due to building in the Los Angeles area. She then went on to describe the several streams and creeks in the Los Angeles area that have been built over, such as Ballona Creek, the stream through LaFayette Park, the stream through UCLA campus, the Arroyo Seco Channel, and La Rosa de Castilla Creek.

Ms. Hall stated that the area of the proposed sports park in Long Beach, what used to be called Walnut Springs or Willow Gulch, was the original source of water for the City of Long Beach. She described its change of form over the years, due to the land use practices. She showed slides of a willow grove in the bed of the creek and ponds or basins that the area was divided up into. She showed a slide of a detention basin that sits over the site of the original springs, or so she has been told. She said that it has a storm drain at one end capturing the flow of what had been called Walnut Springs and it shunts water along the

edge of the shelf to another main channel for drainage. She said that when it overflows, it does so into the basin and then goes back into the storm drain, out into the Los Angeles River. She said that there are willow trees, a ravine, some riparian existence, and some cattails on the site. She stated that there are plants that are host plants to specific species of birds and bugs.

Ms. Hall presented a quick concept proposal she drew up for the proposed sports park site. She brought up Strawberry Creek in Berkeley, California as a restored stream at a previous railroad right of way, as an example. She mentioned Baxter Creek in El Cerrito, near Berkeley, which used to be a street median and is now restored. Ms. Hall mentioned Hazard Park and the Devil's Dip Creek, in the Los Angeles area, which they have looked at restoring with grants. She said that these sites could be used as examples for the Willow/Spring site.

President Kozaites thanked Ms. Hall for her presentation.

Mr. Tim (?) said that he surveyed the site for birds and it is a host to a number of species, including Red Tail Hawks. He said that he also works at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge in recovery of Light-Footed Clapper Rail, one of our endangered species. He said that they have noticed an increasing number of Red Tail Hawks on the refuge preying on our endangered species. That has occurred because of filling in and redeveloping areas like this that are providing habitat. If you fill in this site, the Red Tail Hawks will come and compromise a 20-year recovery project.

Ms. Ann Cantrell thanked the Commission for allowing them to be on the agenda today. She said she has a long history with this site from when she was on the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force back in the 90's and they were shown this site as a possibility for a sports park. At that time, the City was also thinking of putting an auto center there. When it was proposed by Jim Hankla as a replacement for El Dorado Park, that was not the group's first choice. They wanted the Navy Base, where there was also a sports facility. They were told that this is a Brownfield, and that this is going to be 50 acres of additional park for Long Beach. She had no idea, even though she is a native Long Beach resident, that there was so much history with this site until she saw Jessica's presentation that there was once a spring there, which is why we have the name Spring Street next to it. Or, that there were willows there, which is why we have Willow on the other side. She said that this was very possibly a Native American site, although there is no physical evidence of it. This would be a natural site for Native Americans in this area because of the water and the willow trees. She said that it then became a source of water for Long Beach, Wilmore City, and it was also a farming community until oil was discovered here. There is a lot of historical significance with this site. Many of us feel this would be an ideal place to put an educational facility to educate children of Long Beach about their history. As Tim mentioned, it is also a surprisingly wonderful habitat for wildlife. In reading the EIR, she read that the biologist found 41 species of birds there and the most important one is the Loggerhead

Shrike, you may know it as the butcher bird. She said that there are only five nesting pairs in the whole Los Angeles Basin and there is a pair in this site. She said that this has so much importance as far as habitat and hopes they can seriously consider what Jessica has proposed here, to retain at least the spring area and willow area and some of the habitat and not bulldoze it. She distributed pictures of the site. She said that Mary Parsell is here from the El Dorado Audubon Society and asked if she wanted to speak.

Ms. Parsell reiterated that there are some really nice birds out there and looking over the list of birds that are there, she sees a common denominator and that is, a lot of them are birds that need open country or open space.

Ms. Hall said that she was at the Los Angeles San Gabriel River Watershed Council and there was a presentation given by the USC Sustainable Cities Program, where they are doing a very comprehensive planning project funded by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. She said they are doing an assessment of the entire LA region. It was mentioned that the Loggerhead Shrike is on its way out of the Los Angeles area, even though it is not endangered in the big picture.

Mr. Don May said that this site has the best views in Long Beach and it was the site of the old Native American village, next to Willow Springs. The last grove of Black Willow around, and the birds that they sustain, is in this site. He said that the upland plants support a huge diversity of rodents, which feed the raptors and owls. Most importantly though, for our heritage and for reintroducing to kids who have no idea about the heritage in this part of the city, we are looking to fill in the old aquifer that was built in the mission days, to put in a beer garden. This is public trust land. Public trust is not only for our tidelands, it also is for our rivers, lakes, and streams. Pay to play parks are not a public trust use. This Commission has an obligation to preserve public trust land for the city and take the comments into consideration.

Ms. Mary Loquvam said she is with the Wetlands Recovery Project and she works very closely with the California Coastal Conservancy. She said that this site was called to her attention about a year ago. This site has captured their imagination for restoration.

Mr. David Kunder said he is from Long Beach Organic and they have been looking at the EIR and have a number of issues. As a retired physician, he was looking at public health implications of having fast food and beer be the sustaining income for this pay for play park. He went out to the Chino Hills Big League Dreams Park this last weekend, and the only food that is allowed is the food that you buy. He said the only kids that were there were Anglo kids. There were a couple of Hispanics and one Black coach, so it will not be serving the under-served north and west part of the city. He mentioned an article about fast food in a medical journal, and how it would increase the weight of young persons and adults. He said that it is not a good idea to have that kind of income supporting this kind of park, which would only be available to the rich

kids. He mentioned that he had a number of other issues and that Angela Reynolds told him that there would be another venue to discuss this before February 14.

Vice President Saltzgaver said that he would have to speak to Angela regarding the other meetings.

Ms. Angela Reynolds said she is an Environmental Officer for the City of Long Beach, and there would be a study session before the Planning Commission regarding the sports park EIR, since that would be the lead agency served. She said that this meeting has not been scheduled yet.

Ms. Summer Hansen, from the Community Friendly Campaign for Children's Day, said that when she was a little girl, she went to Coyote Creek all the time to collect tadpoles in a paper cup, saw the skaters on the pond, cattails, and beautiful dragon flies flying by. She said that we need islands of peace, that we have lots of activities in our culture. She had an opportunity to go to Willow Springs and said you can't even see the streets when you are there, it is like a wonderful valley and we really need to preserve it. She said she is personally against drinking in the sports park.

President Kozaites thanked all for their comments and for the presentation and stated that the Commission would be taking all the issues up to the Capital Improvements Committee before next month's Commission meeting, and they would be bringing back a recommendation.

B. 2004 COMMISSION ON YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S (CYC) ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Hester asked Cindy Fogg to present the Commission on Youth and Children's Annual Report. He said that they presented this information to the City Council and he requested that they present it to the Parks and Recreation Commission, even though they don't report back to the Commission, because it is so interesting.

Ms. Fogg stated that the Commission has had an opportunity to look the report over and it contains everything it is supposed to, per the Long Beach Municipal Code. It also has the profile of Long Beach youth and children, which was a pretty big effort for the Commission, but they were determined to get through it. However, they recognize that this is just a starting point. She said that they adopted the outcome areas that the Los Angeles Children's Planning Council had adopted about 5 or 10 years ago. They collected data on a county-wide basis, recording it on their children's scorecard. There was also a sociology of youth analysis included, prepared by a Sociology of Youth class at California State University, Long Beach. She said that it is not the opinion of the City or the Commission, but it is very interesting. She said that the Annual Report was given to the City Council last week along with five recommendations, which they have not acted upon yet.

Mr. Hester said that the City Council received and filed the report and requested that it be brought back before the City Council on March 15, with specific implementation of four to five recommendations. He said that the Commission asked to be involved in the Youth Services Study, which is directed by the City Manager.

Vice President Saltzgaver asked if there was anything the Commission could do to help.

Mr. Hester responded that the Commission could send a letter of support for the five recommendations, to incorporate into the Council item.

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that he would like some time to study the ramifications of the recommendations.

Commissioner Antenore mentioned that Rebecca Turrentine and Pierre Batton were going to make a presentation to a subcommittee of the League of Women Voters, which is studying the care of youth and children in the city.

Mr. Hester mentioned that this is the first Commission that has both adults and youth serving on the Commission. He said that the ability for youth to be involved and have their voices heard is very important, and this is a good direction.

Commissioner Marmion said that he would like to present this Annual Report to the Miller Foundation, because the whole purpose of the Foundation is to serve the youth of the city, and data and ideas are needed to underlie the grants.

It was moved by Commissioner Marmion and seconded by Commissioner Antenore to receive and file the 2004 Commission on Youth and Children's Annual Report and to support the concept of their recommendations as they evolve. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Fogg stated that the flyer distributed for the LBX Skate Grand Crown Championships was one of her programs. She said that the Skate Park on Wheels is having a championship at the El Dorado Skate Park and they would love to have the Commissioners come by.

Mr. Bob Lamond said that both the Commission on Youth and Children and the Long Beach Youth Fund have accounts with Partners of Parks.

President Kozaites said that the City lost an excellent citizen and employee of the Department, Doug Parsons, and he would like to close this meeting in his memory.

XI. COMMENTS

A. AUDIENCE

Ms. Summer Hansen said that the 11th Annual Children's Day Celebration and Parade would be held at El Dorado Park on Saturday, April 30, which would be kicked off again this year at Kaleidoscope at California State University, Long Beach on Saturday, April 23.

Ms. Hansen requested support for the event from the Parks and Recreation Commission. She requested that someone would consider taking over this event in the future, as she is getting older.

B. STAFF

There were no comments from staff.

C. COMMISSIONERS

It was moved by Vice President Saltzgaver and seconded by Commissioner Satariano to adjourn the meeting in memory of E. Douglas Parsons. The motion carried unanimously.

XII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2005, at the El Dorado Park West Community Center, in the Senior Center library, 2800 Studebaker Road, Long Beach.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

President Kozaites adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m. in memory of E. Douglas Parsons, Superintendent of Marina Operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Black
Executive Secretary
to the Director

c: Phil T. Hester, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine